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THE OBSERVATOR.

the Foreign News. Of the Treaty of the Cevennois *with the* French *King. The Weavers Grievances. The Remedy thereof.*

From **Saturday** June the 3d, to **Wednesday** June the 7th, 1704.

untry-m. THE more you have told me of this old Tyrannical High-Prieſt *Laud*, the more I hate e *High-Flyers* for crying him up. Will you tell e a little more of his Vices?

Obſ. At another time I will. At preſent let us hat of our own Misfortunes & the Publick News.

Country-m. There's little News, and that but ry indifferent; our good Proteſtant Friends in e *Cevennes* are come to Articles with the *French* yrant; they could hold out no longer without ſiſtance, and ſo have made an Honourable eace. They are to remove themſelves and their ffects to what Places they pleaſe.

Obſ. I think they have done well; they have ought it out as long as they could, and were ebell'd by ſome, and Heretick'd by others, and ot thought worthy of the Care of any Body; nd now it ſeems they have Compounded ith their King.

Country-m. I wiſh you would Compound too with my Queen, for I don't find any Body will Aſſiſt you againſt the *Philiſtine Jacobites* and *High-Flyers*; your Party will hardly raiſe Money enough to buy you a Pint of Wine for a Stirrup Cup to the Pillory.

Obſ. Tis no matter for that; I wiſh I may never ſee the Malice of a certain Party that now ſeems to have the aſcendant, affect every Honeſt Man in *England* as now it does me. What becomes of me, matter not much the Publick; yet *Solon* taught, That the beſt Governments eſteemed Injuries done to a private Perſon as done to the Publick: And we ſhall never be happy till every Man ſhall eſteem anothers Oppreſſions as his own. The Caſe of the *Cevennois* is far wide from mine. They might have been a great Thorn in the Side of *Lewis*, and that with but a ſmall Aſſiſtance, and now their Treaty, when concluded, will be as Miſchievous to the Allies in that part of *Europe*; for that Inſurrection being Terminated, the Forces employ'd in the Upper and Lower *Langtedocks* will be ready to March againſt *Savoy*, the *Cantons* of the *Switzers*, or to Augment any of the *French* Armies.

Country-m. Pray, Sir, whether do you think thoſe People will go?

Obſ. God Bleſs 'em where ever they go; let 'em People ſome new Province or Territory, that it may once be ſaid there is a Country without *Knaves* or *Cowards* in it.

I could wiſh 'em all on Board Sir *George Rook*'s Squadron with the Prince *D' Armſtadt*, then we might expect a Powerful Diverſion in *Catalonia*.

Country-m. I wiſh they would come to *England* that I might ſee 'em, and have an Account of their Victories from their own Mouths. I proteſt my Heart is almoſt broke for want of a Fighting Story.

Obſ. Hold up a little longer: By this Day Fortnight Prince *Eugene* will help you to a Fighting Story, but I muſt not allow you to ſee the *Cevennois* in *England*.

Country-m. Why ſo? You love 'em well enough.

Obſ. Yes in their own Country, but Foreigners in *England*, are like the Plague of *Lice* in *Ægypt*, Swarming in every Quarter, the *French* Joſtle our Traders already, and in Time may Trip up their Heels.

Country-m. Ay, but I would have all theſe *French* ſent Home again, and the *Cevennois* come in their Room.

Obſ. Theſe that are here have Wit enough to ſtay, they have left off their Wooden Shoes, and can't ſoon bring their Stomachs to their old Food of brown Bread and Garlick.

Country-m. I proteſt they deſtroy the Trade of our Natives like ſo many *Locuſts*; our poor *Weavers* are almoſt Ruin'd by them. I have a Kinſman Apprentice to a *Weaver* at *London*, and his Maſter tells me that the *French* quite ſpoil their Trade, and that my Cozen *Ned* had much better been kept to the *Plough Tail*.

Obſ. I am ſorry for the decay of the *Woollen-Manufacture* and the *Weavers* Trade, in which vaſt Numbers of the People of the Realm are employ'd; but I cannot heartily pity the *Weavers*, who have ſuch good Laws, and make ſuch little uſe of 'em for the ſecurity of their Art and Miſtery. The Statute of *Rich.* 3*d.* Cap. 9. Enacts, *That an Alien Artificer ſhall not Dwell, or Exerciſe any Handicraft in* England, *unleſs as Servant to a Subject in the ſame Art, on pain of Forfeiture of all his Goods.* Here's a plain Law againſt 'em.

Country-m. Aye, ſo I find; but how ſhall the People have Redreſs?

Obſ. Any particular Member that is acquainted with the Injury, may complain to the Company of Weavers, whoſe Rules are bound, by Virtue of their Office, to maintain the Rights of their Charter; and I am Informed that a Court of Weavers do ſit once in the Week throughout the Year.

Country-m. But our *Neds* Maſter tells me, That theſe People do admit of *Aliens* into the Company, to be Maſter Weavers within their Juriſdiction, and to be Maſters of the Company; and theſe *Aliens* to take *Alien* Apprentices.

Obſ. This is contrary to the forecited Statute, a Son or Daughter excepted, on the Penalty of 20 *l.* as alſo to the Fourteenth and Fifteenth of *Hen.* Eighth, Chap. 2. which ſays *No manner of Alien Artificer Denizen'd, ſhall take any but a Subject Apprentice, on pain of Ten Pounds each.*

Country-m. But our *Neds* Maſter tells me, That the Company do admit of ſuch as have ſerved their time in Foreign Countries.

Obſ. In Foreign Countries Artificers and Handicrafts ſerve only Two, Three, Four or Five, and very ſeldom Seven Years to a Trade: Now a Perſon Serving his Time beyond Sea, cannot entitle him to his Freedom in that Trade in *England*; for even the Natives of *England* are Freemen in Trade only of that Corporation in which they Serv'd their Time; which, according to the Statute, is Seven Years, without which

Servitude

Servitude no one can be free of a City, Corporation, or Company in Charter, except by Right of Inheritance, which an Alien cannot Claim. *Eliz.* 5. 19. *Hen.* 7.

Country-m. But if the Rulers of that Company will have it so, who can help it?

Obs. If Men will betray the Trust reposed in them; nay, if Men will Perjure themselves, who can help that? Our Forefathers had such just Notions of the Trade of *England*, and of the Advantage thereof to the Realm, that they determined the time of Servitude, and the *Modus* of Freedom by Penal Statutes; and conform to these Laws, is the Oath of the Freemen of the City of *London*, part of which is, *That they shall take no Alien Apprentice, or make Persons Free till they have Served Seven Years.*

Country-m. Well, as you say, 'tis a sad thing for Men to break their Oaths to Ruin their own Trade.

Obs. I could here recite to you many Laws relating to Foreigners, which, perhaps, might put the Weavors on some new Thoughts, if not Practices. And yet, notwithstanding the just and due Restrictions on *English* Trade, to keep it in the Hands of the Natives, the Foreigners have room enough in *England* to get a Livelyhood for themselves, and to be Serviceable to the Common-Wealth. The Act made in the Fifteenth Year of *Car.* 2. *chap.* 15. allows them equal Priviledge with the *English*, as the Act expresses,

Be it Enacted, and it is hereby Enacted by the Kings most Excellent Majesty, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons in this present Parliament Assembled, and by the Authority thereof, that from, and after the first Day of October *next ensuing, it shall and may be Lawful for any Person or Persons whatsoever, Native or Foreign, freely and without paying any Acknowledgement, Fee or other Gratuity for the same, in any place of* England *and* Wales, *Priviledged or Unpriviledged, Corporate or not Corporate, to set up and exercise the Trade, Occupation or Mistery of Breaking, Hicheling, or Dressing of Hemp or Flax; as also for making, and whitening of Thread, as also of Spinning, Weaving, Making, Whitening or Bleaching of any sort of Cloth whatsoever, made of Hemp or Flax only. As also the Trade, Occupation or Mistery of making of Twine or Nets for Fishery, or of stowing of Cordage. As also the Trade, Occupation or Mistery, of making any sort of Tapstery Hangings; any Law Statute or Usage to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding.*

Country-m. In good Truth, Master *Observator*, these Out-Landish People have Room enough to get a Livelihood; all these Trades would employ abundance of Hands.

Obs. And these Trades, if Exercised, would tend much to the Advantage of the Realm.

Country-m. And for that Reason the *French* won't engage themselves therein; no, nor what occasion have they to do it, as long as they can be admitted Free-Weavers? Pray, Sir, will you send our *Ned*'s Master a little of your Advice in this Case.

Obs. I don't know Man when I am safe. I don't know what to talk of; if I should speak one Word against Her Majesties *Worshipful Ratcatcher*, I may have an Information brought against me, with I don't know how many *Inuendo*'s in it, that I did Wickedly, Maliciously and Scandalously design thereby to disturb the Peace of the Realm.

Country-m. You may speak softly then, let no Body but you and I know of it.

Obs. I tell thee, Honest *Country-man*, I [illegible] that there was some easie Method found out to oblige Corporations to Act according to Powers Granted by their Charter. Here in lies the Grievance; the Masters, Wardens Courts-of-Assistance, of Incorporated Compa are Composed of such of the Members as longest Standing on the Livery, and of the m plentiful Estates; these, when they get Gove ment of the Company, and the Rents thereof, to their Hands, do Manage without Contro if they admit Aliens, or do any thing contra to Law, the rich Men that are not of the Cou of-Assistance will pass it by, because they sta next the Chair, and have a speedy Prospect doing the like themselves. The poor Tradesm who are the only People Oppress'd by these Si ster Practices, are not able to reduce their Extr judicial Proceedings by Legal Process, for the want both Money and Friends.

Country-m. Why then their Case is desparate Is this all the Comfort you can send our Ne Master?

Obs. The poor Weavers have but one way o Relief, and that is by Appeal to Parliament 'tis in the Power of our Representatives to mak Men Honest.

Country-m. God Almighty put it into thei Hearts to consider the Case of the poor Weavers But if they can make Men Honest, I am sure they will have Work, when ever they shall please to enter upon it.

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